

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

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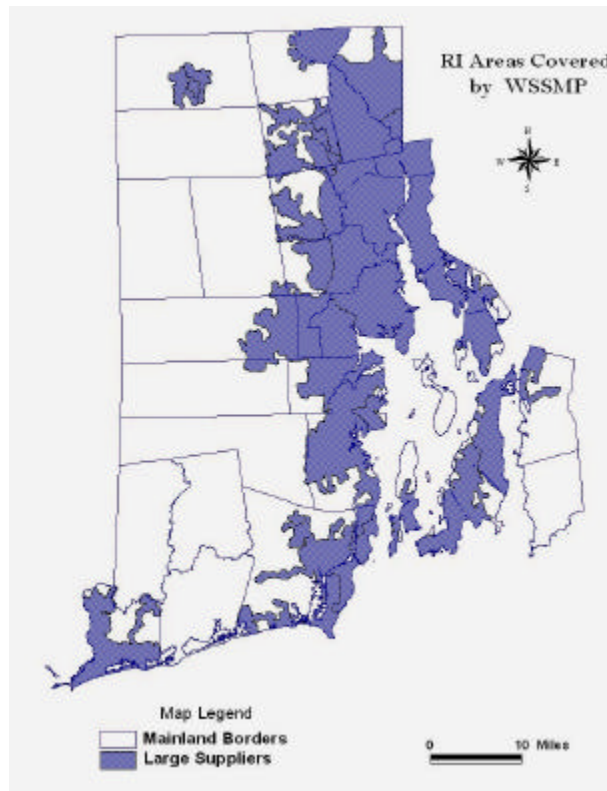
Quarterly Progress Report

Water Supply System Management Plan Reviews Completed

Drinking water is the most important but often taken for granted natural resource of the State. In light of the several dry summers recently experienced by the State, water supply related issues are going to remain major topics for planners to incorporate into land use planning. Rhode Island has 478 public drinking water systems that range in size from small seasonal camp stores to large suppliers such as the Providence Water Supply Board. Planning for large drinking water systems in Rhode Island is addressed through the Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP) process. It began with legislation (R.I. Gen. Law 46-15.3) that was adopted in 1990 and was later revised in 1997. The legislation requires that all large suppliers who sell or distribute drinking water to prepare a WSSMP. A large supplier is defined as one that supplies, sells or distributes more than 50 million gallons of drinking water per year. There are a total of 29 drinking water suppliers that exceed this threshold. These large suppliers serve 30 of the 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island.

Originally conducted under the Department of Environmental Management in 1994, the process is now coordinated by the Water Resources Board. The WSSMP are intended to address ongoing management concerns of operating water systems such as maintaining capacity and capability, protecting quality, resource conservation, and addressing emergency situations. The WSSMP process calls for planning to be done for the protection of water sources, anticipating future demands, reducing peak demands and identifying potential future service areas. The suppliers have all finished a second edition of WSSMP for their system since the process started in 1994. The plans are required by the legislation to be revised once every 5 years.

Statewide Planning is mandated by this legislation to participate in an interagency review along with the Departments of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and Health. This review provides the Water Resources Board recommendations on the compliance of the WSSMP with each agency's existing water related goals, policies and programs. This review also helps Statewide Planning to fulfill its mission of planning for the physical, economic, and social development of the State by assuring that there is coordination between the water suppliers, state agencies and local governments of the State. Statewide Planning advised the water suppliers on



compliance with existing water resource policies that are part of the State Guide Plan (SGP). Further, Statewide Planning helped identify drinking water resources issues in local comprehensive plans for the suppliers to address in the WSSMP and provided an assessment of whether the WSSMP achieved the objectives of the comprehensive plans related to water supply. Each supplier was directed to obtain consistency letters from the appropriate local planning officials that the WSSMP complied with local comprehensive plans where appropriate.

Statewide Planning has helped set drinking water related policy since the passage of the first Clean Water Act in the 1970's. Existing drinking water related policy is contained in the SGP. The SGP has numerous elements that set forth policy concerning drinking and water resources, a number of which were adopted in the early 1990's.

The major goals of the existing water policy of the SGP are to encourage good water quality, to discourage overuse of the resource, to improve infrastructure quality, to ensure that systems are sustainable, both technically and institutionally, and to integrate water planning with land use planning. Some of the specific water policy items searched for within the 29 WSSMP were:

- ❖ Consistency with the goals of the SGP
- ❖ Supply management policies
 - Non-account water percentage
- ❖ Demand management policies
 - Anticipated future demand
 - Water reuse or recycling
 - Non-potable water
 - Conservation / public education programs
 - Technical assistance to major users
 - Type of rate structures
- ❖ Water quality protection measures
- ❖ Emergency management planning
 - Updated interconnection / assistance agreements
 - Drought planning
- ❖ Coordination with local comprehensive plan(s)

The item found to be inconsistent with the SGP the most often was the lack of updated supply and

emergency assistance agreements between adjacent suppliers. The extreme case of this was brought to the attention of the public during the groundwater contamination crisis suffered by the Pascoag Utility District System in 2001. Pascoag turned to the neighboring Harrisville system for help and found it difficult to obtain water as the emergency agreement had lapsed between the two suppliers.

The area of the greatest improvement for the suppliers was in preventing water loss. Accomplishments were made by upgrading meters on a regular basis, improving inspections and conducting leak detection on a frequent basis. Most suppliers have managed to reduce the overall non-account water percentage to at or below the SGP goal of 15 % through such measures. (Non-account water is the system wide loss of water through leaks, under registering meters, or other reasons not accounted for.)

The first round of the WSSMP in 1994 was a good start on encouraging suppliers to think comprehensively about their systems. During this second round Statewide Planning pushed suppliers again to look beyond the every day maintenance and next year's supply issues in looking at anticipated future demands predicted by local comprehensive plans for their systems. In general, the insertion of SGP policy in WSSMP has improved in this second round but the specific areas concerning the use of non-potable water, water reuse and recycling, increased and better public education, and the use of more technological advanced water conservation measures still need more attention by suppliers.

In Summary, Statewide Planning has encouraged suppliers to look comprehensively at their systems and to work more closely with the municipal governments of the communities they serve. The WSSMP have valuable technical information on water resources issues that local governments can use to assist in the revision of local comprehensive plans concerning future land use and water supply where appropriate. Information is present for planners to consider in formulating land use allocations, density limitation and decisions about future land uses.

Committee Actions

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in December. They considered amendments to the scoring criteria for projects subject to the priority rating system of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. They also considered a staff advisory opinion requested by the Energy Facility Siting Board on the relocation of a 115kV transmission line by Narragansett Electric Company. This project is required by the I-195 realignment. The Council deferred action on both the scoring criteria and the advisory opinion until their January meeting.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met in October and December opting to cancel the November meeting to allow for members to participate in the brainstorming session on the update of the Land Use Policies and Plan. The Committee received briefings on two Technical Papers dealing with *Transportation: Number 152, Transportation Corridors and Number 153, 2000 Census Data for Transportation Planning*. The Committee was also briefed by the Department of Health on their *Source Water Assessment Plan*. The Committee took action on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Priority Ranking Criteria by recommending approval of staff proposed amendments to the State Planning Council

GROWTH PLANNING COUNCIL

The Governor's Growth Planning Council is charged with examining the impacts of the state's current development patterns, evaluating the effect of state programs on sustainable development, recommending means to encourage sustainable development and fostering partnerships to build local capacity to manage growth. Statewide Planning is providing staff support to the Council.

The Council met in both November and December and focused on growth centers. They considered two projects as pilot cases for the growth centers concept. One in Burrillville and the other in East Providence. After presentations in November, the Council reconvened in December and designated these as the first two growth centers in Rhode Island. Statewide Planning was designated to lead the effort in coordinating the state response which is anticipated to be a prioritizing of resources for these centers.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

As part of the upcoming 2004 update of the long range transportation plan, **Transportation 2025**, focus groups were organized. TAC members along with invited guests and members of the public will be part of the following groups: Congestion and ITS; Freight and Northeast Corridor; Land Use and Environment; Safety; Security; and Transit and Urban Transportation.

Staff presented two technical papers to the TAC:

- *Travel Corridor Planning Initiative: Technical Paper 152*
- *2000 Census Data for Transportation Planning: Technical Paper 153*



Transportation

TRAVEL CORRIDORS

The Travel Corridor Planning Initiative is now complete. This initiative consisted of a series of six workshops for local planners to gather information and identify issues. These were followed by seven facilitated public workshops where a vision for each corridor was created.

This initiative was successful in bringing neighboring communities together to discuss the relationship between land use and the transportation infrastructure and the conflicts that have arisen. The update of the Transportation Plan (now in progress) will be an opportunity to put what we learned to good use as we develop a framework for investing in the State's infrastructure over the next 20 years.

We would like to thank our colleagues at RI Department of Transportation and the RI Public Transit Authority for their participation in this effort, as well as city and town officials and members of the public.

Technical Paper 152, which documents the study, is available at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/enter.htm>. Additionally, there are limited copies available of the Public Workshop Report.



2000 CENSUS DATA FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

After many delays, the Bureau of the Census has released the long-awaited Census Transportation Planning Package. This data includes vehicle ownership, commuting travel times, mode of transportation, and breakdown by county and by city and town of where people live and work.

TRANSPORTATION 2025

The 3 year update of Rhode Island's long range ground transportation plan is now underway. Highlights of this update include:

- First use of 2000 census data and new population and employment projections
- Homeland security must be addressed
- Performance measures will be incorporated into the plan
- The travel corridor planning approach will be used as an analysis tool
- Different land use scenarios will be analyzed for their impact on the transportation infrastructure
- The plan will serve as the state's congestion management plan
- A new 6 year federal funding authorization bill is expected to pass in 2004. This will have a great impact on the 20 year financial plan.

Focus groups consisting of TAC members, invited agencies, and other volunteers are being used to review existing policies and recommendations, evaluate current data, and formulate new policies, goals, objectives, and performance measures. The following groups have been formed, and will meet approximately 3 times each:

- Congestion and Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Environment and Land Use
- Freight / Northeast Corridor
- Safety
- Security
- Transit and Urban Transportation

Additionally, a public opinion survey, developed jointly with the University of Rhode Island Community Planning students, will be administered. Please visit <http://www.planning.ri.gov/gtp/gtpupdate.htm> for updates or contact Katherine Trapani at 222-6479.

Comprehensive Plans

The major accomplishments of the Comprehensive Plans Section during the last quarter of 2003 were the State approvals of the Town of Bristol Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update, the Town of Little Compton Comprehensive Community Plan, and Comprehensive Plan amendments from the Towns of East Greenwich (EG 03-1 & EG 03-2) and Cumberland (CUM 03-1). The approval of the Cumberland amendment is significant in that it marks the first time that a municipality's Housing Element has successfully incorporated an "affordable housing plan" component.

Upon completion of the State's initial review, the Director of the Department of Administration sent "Letters of Deficiency" to the communities of Jamestown, Middletown, and Newport regarding their respective Five-Year Updates.

The State reviews of revisions to the Towns of Hopkinton and Warren Comprehensive Community Plans and East Greenwich Comprehensive Community Plan Amendment EG 03-3 were successfully completed. Certificates of Approval should be issued early in 2004.

Still undergoing the State review process are revisions to the Town of Exeter Comprehensive Plan as well as the Five-Year Updates for the municipalities of Cumberland, East Greenwich, Pawtucket, and Scituate.

As of the close of 2003, thirty-two of Rhode Island's thirty-nine cities and towns have State-approved local comprehensive plans and three have State-approval of their five-year update.

Much of the last portion of the year was spent in developing and presenting a two session training program on Affordable Housing. During the quarter, four presentations were made: the first as part of the State's Office of Training and Development Program, the second in the East Bay, the third in the Blackstone Valley, and the fourth for South County towns. Audiences for these programs have been around 60 people per session. The training was developed by Grow Smart Rhode Island, R.I. Housing and Statewide Planning. The municipalities contribute for each person attending the training.

Land Use

During the past quarter the Land Use section has completed a three year project of technical reviews for all 29 **Water System Supply Management Plans**, has convened a major brainstorming session for **Land Use 2025**, the State Land Use Plan, and has coordinated amendments to the **Rivers Policy and Classification Plan**.

Nancy Hess, Principal Environmental Planner, recently completed the final technical reviews of the Water System Supply Management Plans (WSSMPs), 2nd editions. (See *feature article*) The WSSMP process directs planning for large drinking water systems in Rhode Island and was established in 1990 per R.I. Gen. Law 46-15.3. The 29 large drinking water suppliers which are subject to this law serve 30 of the 39 cities and towns and approximately three-quarters of the state's population.

On Nov. 20th, Statewide Planning hosted a brainstorming session attended by 65 representatives of the State Planning Council, the

Technical Committee, municipal planners and special guests to consider visions, goals and policies for the update to the State Land Use Policies and Plan. Presentations and discussions focused on three large themes: *Greenspace, Community Design, and Infrastructure*. As part of the project research, Blanche Higgins, Supervising Planner, has conducted more than 30 interviews of individuals and groups to gather various perspectives on existing land use trends and on short and long-term objectives for the 20 year plan,

The Rivers Council, assisted by Kevin Nelson, Principal Planner, completed a two year effort to review and amend the 1998 Rivers Plan. The two major purposes for the proposed revisions are, first, to extend the scope of the plan to include tidal (estuarine) waters and, second, to utilize the U.S. Geological Survey's watershed classification system known as Hydrologic Units (HUCs) for delineation of Rhode Island's watershed boundaries under the State Guide Plan.

RI Census

The U.S. Census Bureau produces the Census 2000 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) file for use by federal agencies responsible for monitoring employment practices and enforcing civil rights laws in the workplace, and for all employers to measure their compliance with the laws. The idea of a data product designed to measure the effects of anti-discrimination laws and regulations in the workplace and to encourage employers' compliance dates

back to the 1970s. Private-sector employers who must comply with federal EEO regulations need to compare the minority and sex compositions of their workforce, by occupation, with the labor force characteristics identified within the same geographic area.

The Census Bureau released the 2000 EEO tabulations in December 2003. The EEO file contains data on the number of people employed in nearly 500 occupations and are presented for specific geographic levels including national, state, metropolitan areas, counties, and

places with populations of 50,000 or more. Data sets present information about gender, race, ethnicity, education, age, industry, and earnings. A new Census 2000 EEO data tool detailing occupation information according to where workers live or work is available on the Census Bureau's website: www.census.gov.



Logo of the United States Census 2000

Economic Development

This quarter, the Economic Development Administration approved the 2003 Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) *Annual Report*. This report gave a review of economic conditions in Rhode Island as compared to the other New England states, discussed the CEDS project solicitation, and presented this year's Priority Project List, giving financing sources and State Guide Plan policies implemented by each project. The Priority Project list contained 14 construction projects and three planning or technical assistance projects. In September, the Technical Committee and the State

Planning Council endorsed the report at their respective meetings. Submission of the *Annual Report* to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and a yearly self-evaluation of the CEDS program are requirements of the planning grant under which the Economic Development Section of Statewide Planning operates.

In addition, the Final Progress Report for our CY 2003 302(a) planning grant was submitted to the Economic Development Administration as well as the application for our CY 2004 planning grant.

Staff coordinated the review of Narragansett Electric's notice of intent application to the Energy Facility Siting Board regarding the relocation of transmission lines to accommodate the rebuilding of I-195 between I-95 and the Washington Bridge.

Intergovernmental Review

- 1 proposal pending from last quarter
- 25 proposals received this quarter
- 26 proposals acted on by staff and reviewing agencies (closed)

Review of EDC projects

- 11 proposals received this quarter
- 8 proposals acted on by staff and reviewing agencies (closed)
- 3 proposals pending
- 1 proposal remains pending

GRAPHICS

During the months of fourth quarter 2003, 119 aerial photographs and/or maps were loaned to 32 state agencies, local governments, and private parties.

Graphics work was provided to the Division of Personnel, the Office of Municipal Affairs, the Building Commissioner's Office, the Office of Library Services and the Division of Human Services.

Rhode Island Geographic Information System



The RIGIS Executive Committee held quarterly meetings in October and December. Items discussed at the October meeting included an overview of preparations for the annual Northeast Arc Users Conference to be hosted by Rhode Island in November. A review of a proposal to improve access to RIGIS products over the World Wide Web, and further discussion on the RIGIS parcel data set standards started earlier in the year were also topics at the October meeting. Items covered in the December meeting included formal adoption of the RIGIS Parcel Standards document, and further discussion on improving RIGIS products through metadata search engines and web technology. (Digital copies of the RIGIS parcel standards can be found on the web at www.edc.uri.edu/rigis and www.planning.ri.gov.)

The RIGIS coordinator worked with Executive Committee members and many other participating GIS users in the state in hosting the Northeast Arc Users Conference held in Newport in November. Over 600 attendees representing 9 northeastern states enjoyed Rhode Island hospitality during the four-day event. The RIGIS coordinator participated in a one day workshop of the Rhode Island Oil Spill Response team and made a presentation on the use of GIS technology to the Town of Lincoln Land Trust in November.

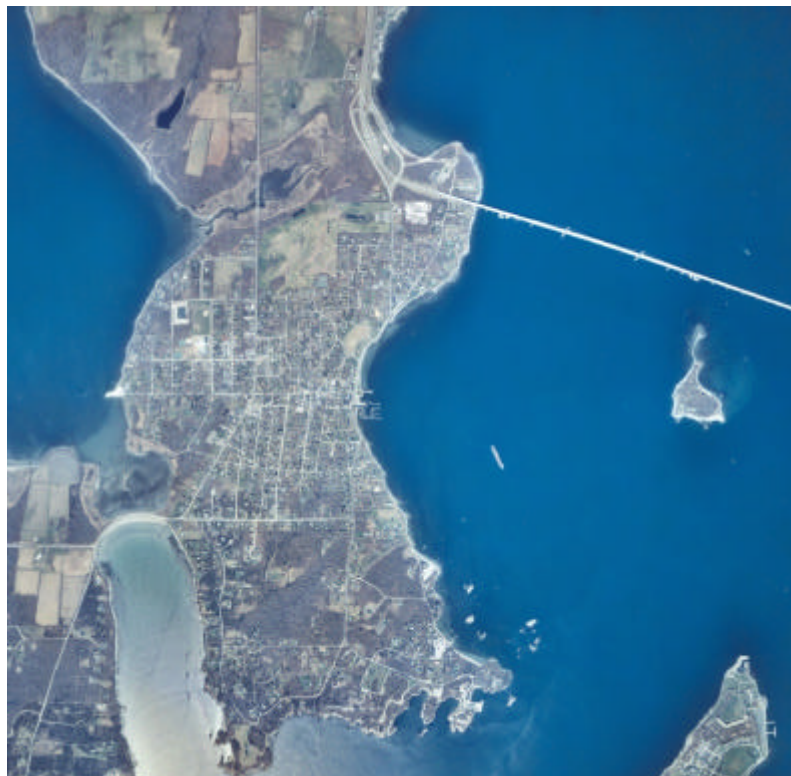
The GIS Analyst at Statewide Planning undertook training at Bridgewater State University sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in December.

Continuing GIS analysis and mapping support was provided to the Land Use Section, Economic Development, Transportation sections of Statewide Planning. Additional work was done for the Rhode Island Rivers Council, State Data Center (Census), and Governor's Fiscal Fitness Program.

The RIDOT/RIGIS project to obtain new (spring of 2003) orthophotography for the state is

proceeding with quality assurance being undertaken at RIDOT. It is expected that the full set of images in a MrSID compressed format will be available to the public in late January of 2004.

A CDROM product including updates the RIGIS Database for 2003 was released, and new data included were posted on the RIGIS data web site at URI (www.edc.uri.edu). A new RIGIS data catalog showing these and all data available through the RIGIS is available at www.planning.ri.gov and at the aforementioned URI site.



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WEB SITE UPDATE

(<http://www.planning.ri.gov>)

Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of the Pawtucket Comprehensive Plan for review.
- posting of Technical Paper 152, Travel Corridors Integrating Land Use with Transportation Planning.
- posting of report number 106, Housing Data Base Update 2003.
- posting of the Intergovernmental Review forms and project listings.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Rivers Council, Growth Planning Council, and Transportation Advisory Committee's Calendar and Agendas.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report

Web support was also provided to the Information Resource Management Board web site.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, kimgo@lori.state.ri.us

STAFF NEWS

Ronnie Sirota, Senior Planner in the Transportation Section celebrated her 15th year in State service on October 4, 2003.

Michael Moan, Bruce Vild and Kim Gelfuso received the State of Rhode Island Career Service Award certificate and pen at the State Service Award Ceremony held in December.
